

Dance Traditions - DANC 211/4 - Winter 2008

Philip Szporer

Monday 3-6 P.M. - TJ-303

Office Hours: by appointment (on Mondays)

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The course focuses on Modernism, Post-Modernism and beyond.

Course text: There is one text for this course, Moving History/Dancing Cultures (A Dance History Reader), edited by Ann Dills & Ann Cooper Albright (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001) - available in the university bookstore. Periodically, a short article may supplement the course text, if relevant.

Please feel free to bring in exceptionally-good articles, books, video clips, sound bytes that you have found so that we can share your intellectual discoveries.

The course will attempt to train students in basic research skills, the importance of historical context, the use and documentation of primary and secondary sources, the critical interpretation of texts, and the implications of methodological approaches.

Lecture 1 (Jan 7)

Birth of Modern Dance: Isadora Duncan, François Delsarte, Loie Fuller, Maud Allen, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn.

Lecture 2 (Jan 14)

Library Orientation with Dance Librarian Audrey Laplante. In class.
(compulsory)

Screening of video 'Shawn and The Men Dancers' will follow the Orientation.

German Expressionism: Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss, Rudolf Laban, plus Rite of Spring.

>>Assignment #1: (10 points)

Compulsory reading:

- Marcia Siegel. "The Harsh and Splendid Heroines of Martha Graham", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*. Middletown. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001, pp. 307-314.

Write a response essay to the compulsory reading (due Jan 21).

Lecture 3 (Jan 21)

Martha Graham, Louis Horst, Erick Hawkins, Doris Humphrey, José Limón

Guest: Mariko Tanabe, noted dancer/choreographer and former member of the Erick Hawkins troupe, will speak to the class (one hour).

>>Assignment #2: (10 points)

Compulsory Reading:

- Brenda Dixon Gottschild. "Stripping the Emperor: The Africanist Presence in American Concert Dance", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 332-341.

Write a précis of the compulsory reading (due Jan 28).

Recommended Reading:

- Thomas DeFrantz, "Simmering Passivity: The Black Male Body in Concert Dance", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 342-349. (for Jan 28)

Lecture 4 (Jan 28)

Katherine Dunham, Pearl Primus, Alvin Ailey, Arthur Mitchell

Recommended reading:

- Deborah Jowitt, "Chance Heroes", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 362-364. (for Feb. 5)

Lecture 5 (Feb 5)

Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, Alwin Nikolais, Jerome Robbins

>>Assignment #3: (4 points)

Compulsory reading:

- Peter Ryan, "10000 Jams Later: Contact Improvisation in Canada, 1974-95", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 414-420.

Write a response essay to the compulsory reading (due Feb 11).

Recommended Reading:

- Sally Banes, "Choreographic Methods of the Judson Dance Theater", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 350-361. (for Feb 11)

Lecture 6 (Feb 11)

Post-Modernism in the US

Perspectives and concerns of the Judson Church to Contact Improvisation (Merce Cunningham, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Steve Paxton, Simone Forti, Elizabeth Streb, Meredith Monk, etc...), and the emergence of forms and connections in Canada (EDAM, Catpoto).

STUDY WEEK: Feb. 18 - no lecture

Suggested Reading:

Iro Tembeck, "The Flowering of the Independents", in *Dancing in Montreal*. Madison, WI.: Studies in Dance History, The Journal of the Society of Dance History Scholars, pg 79-98. (For Feb 25)

Lecture 7 (Feb 25)

Parallel Universe: Quebec Dancing into the 21st Century

Consideration of the social, political and cultural shifts in Quebec, with emphasis on Groupe de la Place Royale to Nouvelle Aire, the major figures (Édouard Lock, Ginette Laurin, Paul-André Fortier, Marie Chouinard, Jean-Pierre-Perrault), and the rise of the independents.

Suggested Reading:

- Pina Bausch handout - TBA (For Mar 4)

Lecture 8 (Mar 4)

I. Post-Modern Strategies Beyond North America

The emergence of Tanztheatre in Germany (Susanne Linke, Reinhild Hoffman, Pina Bausch), plus William Forsythe, Mats Ek, Jiri Kylian, Ohad Naharin.

Guest: TBA

>>Assignment #4: (4 points)

Compulsory Reading:

- Bonnie Sue Stein, "Butoh: "Twenty Years Ago We Were Crazy, Dirty and Mad", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 376-383.

Write a précis of the compulsory reading (due Mar 11).

Lecture 9 (Mar 11)

II. Post-Modern Strategies Beyond North America

Butoh (Japan), and the traditional vs. contemporary dialectic in Asian dance.

Recommended reading:

- Ann Cooper Albright, "Embodying History: Epic Narrative and Cultural Identity in African American Dance", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 439-454. (For Mar 18)

Lecture 10 (Mar 18)

III. Post-Modern Strategies Beyond North America

Belgium – Wim Vandekeybus, Anne T. de Keersmaeker, Alain Platel

From African Contemporary Dance Forms to the Africanist presence in Contemporary American Performance:

Salia ni Seydou, Willa Jo Zollar, Bill T. Jones, Rennie Harris, Savion Glover.

>>Assignment #5: (2 points)

Compulsory Reading:

- "Discussing the Undiscussible", Arlene Croce, *The New Yorker*, 1995 (handout to students)

Write 2 questions addressing issues brought out in the article that could be used for an in-class debate (due Mar 31).

Recommended reading:

Ann Dils, "Absent Present", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 462-471. (For Mar 31)

Mar 24 – University closed

Lecture 11 (Mar 31)

Critical Perspectives

Dance writing and ethics, incorporating a debate of the required reading.

Dance on Film and Video

Dance technologies and experimentation, from Norman McLaren, Maya Deren, Merce Cunningham/Charles Atlas, Lloyd Newson, to the Hollywood musical, and dance for television.

*****FINAL ESSAY DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. Late submissions after this date will be penalized a grade per day.**

Lecture 12 (Apr 7)

Cancelled due to department pre-production schedules for end-of-term shows.

GRADING:

Assignments & Exams:

1 - quiz (1) - 20%

A short answer in-class exam based on class lectures, discussion, readings, media examples, and discussions.

2 - précis of required reading & writing of relevant questions (2 précis in total - each assignment is worth 8 points, plus the 2 questions for Lecture 11 - 4 points) - 20 %

Grading of the précis is based on clarity of expression, understanding of material, and to elucidate the relevance, significance, and essential meaning of the articles/chapters. Typed, doubled-spaced (reasonable font size).

DETAILS ON WRITING A PRÉCIS WILL BE GIVEN IN CLASS.

3 - two response papers - 20% (each short essay is worth 10 points)

Response essays are based on two selected chapters from the assigned text. There are several types of response: You need to ask at least one question about the reading. This can be either a point that you're confused about or one that you'd like cleared up; it can be an objection you see to an argument in the readings; a query about how something said in the reading relates to something else; a critical response; or anything else.

Typed, doubled-spaced (with a reasonable font size), no bibliography or footnotes required, unless warranted. **500 words** each.

4- final essay - 30% Due: Mar 31

"Dancing out the Difference" is the focus for the essay. Choose an individual or a group of individuals and put into context the impact of their work. Consider the social, cultural and the aesthetic shift realized through their efforts.

The essay may be written in French or English. All papers (length: 7 pages) must be typed, double-spaced, with a reasonable font size, paginated, and include your name, a title, as well as proper citations/references, bibliography, filmography, videography, etc. . . .

Grades are based on clarity of expression, observational, descriptive, and analytic skills, research methods, references, footnotes and bibliography.

5 - attendance and participation - 10%

Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of every class. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. If you miss one class, your attendance/participation mark will automatically decrease 5%, two absences 10%. Exception: if you have a justified absence (please see the Teacher and Student Handbook for department rules and a definition of what is justified).

Repeated lateness may jeopardize a student's ability to pass.

Attendance/participation grades are based on preparedness for class, willingness to engage in class discussions and listening attentively. Blog entries (through the Moodle site) will also be considered.

Summary of Criteria of Evaluation:

1. Pop Quiz (1): 20 %
2. Precis (2) and Questions related to Compulsory Readings: 20%.
3. Response Essays (2): 20% (each essay is worth 10 points)
3. Final Essay (due Mar 31, 2008): 30%
4. Attendance: 10%

To receive the best grade, your writing must be error-free and well structured.
Plagiarized work will result in a failed grade.

LATE WORK IS NOT ENCOURAGED. If you have a valid reason for postponing assignment submissions, such as a death in the family or a serious illness, please contact me (or Hilary, the Department Assistant), and we'll arrange a reasonable alternative. Otherwise, a grade will be deducted for each day the paper is late (i.e., 'B' to 'B-').